

PROVIDING THAT CHILDREN BE COMMITTED TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE IN LIEU OF BEING COMMITTED TO THE NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS; THAT THE PROPERTY AND PERSONNEL OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS BE AVAILABLE FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO OR ACCEPTED BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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JULY 19, 1951.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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Mr. HARRIS, from the Committee on the District of Columbia, submitted the following

## REPORT

[To accompany S. 492]

The Committee on the District of Columbia, to whom was referred the bill (S. 492) to provide that children be committed to the Board of Public Welfare in lieu of being committed to the National Training School for Girls; that the property and personnel of the National Training School for Girls be available for the care of children committed to or accepted by the Board of Public Welfare; and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The needs for this legislation are explained in the letter of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to Hon. Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives and that letter is made a part of this report.

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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
Washington 4, D. C.

The SPEAKER,  
United States House of Representatives,  
Washington 25, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. SPEAKER: The Commissioners of the District of Columbia have the honor to submit herewith a draft of a bill entitled "A bill to provide that children be committed to the Board of Public Welfare in lieu of being committed to the National Training School for Girls; that the property and personnel of the National Training School for Girls be available for the care of children committed to or accepted by the Board of Public Welfare, and for other purposes," which they request be enacted at an early date.

Under the proposed legislation delinquent children would be committed to the Board of Public Welfare instead of the National Training School for Girls; also the physical resources of the Training School would be made available to the Board for the care and training of children committed to it or under its care, without reference to the type of commitment or the period for which commitments are made.

The National Training School for Girls was incorporated by act of Congress on July 9, 1888, under the name of the Reform School for Girls. Its first building was opened November 6, 1893, on a 19-acre farm at the corner of what is now MacArthur Boulevard and Loughborough Road. Additional buildings were built as the number of girls under care at the school increased from an original 29 to a peak of 119 in 1928. The land is owned by the United States. The buildings were erected with funds appropriated out of District revenues. The population, as of the beginning of December 1948, had decreased to 19.

Until 1941 both white and Negro girls were admitted to this school, but the number of white girls was never more than a small fraction of the number of Negro girls. Since 1941 the school has been limited to Negro girls. The few delinquent white girls who need a training-school type of care have been placed by the Board in private institutions under contract.

The number of Negro girls committed to the National Training School for Girls has been decreasing in recent years. Commitments to the school numbered 35 in the fiscal year 1945; 17 in the fiscal year 1946; 17 in the fiscal year 1947; and 11 in the fiscal year 1948.

Commitment to the National Training School for Girls must be until age 21. On the other hand, the court may commit children direct to the Board of Public Welfare for any length of time up to the age of 21. The number of commitments to the National Training School for Girls is therefore dependent upon the number of Negro girls whose offenses are serious enough, and whose need is sufficient, to justify long-term custody in such an institution. The reduction in number of commitments indicates that the number of such girls has lessened to the point where the institution's program should be changed to one for which there is a greater need.

The Board of Public Welfare has two institutions of the industrial home school type. One of these schools is on Wisconsin Avenue and is used for white boys and white girls. The other is at Blue Plains and is for Negro boys. Commitments of children to these schools are without limit as to type of commitment or length of stay. The Board may place any white child or Negro boy in its care in one of these home schools for as long as he needs and can benefit from the school's program. The Board in its discretion may take the child from the home school and place him in a foster home, or return him to his own home, or help him establish himself as self-supporting and independent if he is old enough and ready for independence; or it may return him to the home school after placement if he is found to need further care in the school.

There is urgent need for an institution of the industrial home school type for Negro girls so as to make available for them the type of care and training which the two industrial home schools are providing so successfully for white children and Negro boys.

The legislation here proposed will make the resources of the National Training School for Girls available to the Board of Public Welfare for that purpose.

The proposed draft of bill was submitted to the Bureau of the Budget and returned to the Commissioners with the advice that there is no objection on the part of that office to the presentation of the bill to Congress.

Respectfully,

GUY MASON,

*Acting President, Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia.*

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 2a of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as introduced, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

(31 STAT. 809, CH. 478)

SEC. 8. That whenever any girl under the age of seventeen years shall be brought before any court of the District of Columbia or any judge of such court, and shall be convicted of any crime or misdemeanor punishable by fine or imprisonment other than imprisonment for life, such court or judge, in lieu of sentencing her to imprisonment in the county jail or fining her, may commit her to the [Reform School for Girls] Board of Public Welfare; [to remain until she shall arrive at the age of twenty-one years unless sooner discharged by the board of trustees.] *Girls committed to the Board of Public Welfare may be committed for such periods as the courts may deem proper, subject to earlier discharge by the Board of Public Welfare, but no girl shall be so committed for a period extending beyond her twenty-first birthday.* And the judges of the criminal and police courts of the District of Columbia shall have power to commit to the [Reform School for Girls,] Board of Public Welfare, first, any girl under seventeen years of age who may be liable to punishment by imprisonment under any existing law of the District of Columbia or any law that may be enacted and in force in said District; second, any girl under seventeen years of age, with the consent of her parent or guardian, against whom any charge of crime or misdemeanor shall have been made, upon probable cause shown to the satisfaction of the court; third, any girl under seventeen years of age who is destitute of a suitable home and adequate means of obtaining an honest living or who is in danger of being brought up, or is brought up, to lead an idle or vicious life; fourth, any girl under seventeen years of age who is incorrigible or habitually disregards the commands of her father or mother or guardian, who leads a vagrant life, or resorts to immoral places or practices, or neglects or refuses to perform labor suitable to her years and condition or to attend school. And the president of the board of trustees may also commit to the [Reform School for Girls] Board of Public Welfare such girls as are mentioned in the foregoing third and fourth classes upon application or complaint, in writing, of a parent or guardian or relative having charge of such girl, and upon such testimony in regard to the facts stated as shall be satisfactory to him; and for taking testimony in such cases he is hereby empowered to administer oaths.

(52 STAT. 599, CH. 309)

SEC. 14. HEARING; JUDGMENT.—The court may conduct the hearing in an informal manner, and may adjourn the hearing from time to time. In the hearing of any case the general public shall be excluded and only such persons as have a direct interest in the case and their representatives admitted. All cases involving children may be heard separately and apart from the trial of cases against adults. The court shall hear and determine all cases of children without a jury unless a jury be demanded by the child, his parents or guardian, or the court.

If the court shall find that the child comes within the provisions of this Act, it may by order duly entered proceed as follows:

(1) Place the child on probation or under supervision in his own home or in the custody of a relative or other fit person, upon such terms as the court shall determine.

(2) Commit the child to the Board of Public Welfare; or to the [National Training School for Girls or the] National Training School for Boys if in need of such care as is given in such [schools] school; or to a qualified suitable private institution or agency willing and able to assume the education, care, and maintenance of such child without expense to the public.



